

*Importance of lab confirmation of seasonal trends of communicable diseases.*

Graphic presentations of laboratory confirmed infections can clearly illustrate the seasonal trends of many communicable diseases. Identifying these trends may assist medical diagnosis based on community prevalence of the disease as well as signaling the onset and end of a given “disease season”.

For example, respiratory or gastrointestinal disease or outbreaks may show many respective similarities upon initial presentation to physicians. In these situations laboratory confirmation of a specific agent will differentiate otherwise similar appearing disease syndromes. Knowing the agent will often dictate treatment, intervention and prevention actions.

Also the dynamics and seasonality of specific communicable diseases in Milwaukee may differ from patterns of the same disease seen in other communities.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department Public Health Laboratory regularly disseminates such trends to area medical providers as part of public health laboratory practice.